Was there a particular way of knowing that was most important in the decision about whether Data was the property of the Star Fleet. If so, why or why not?

There were a few different ways of knowing that were used when deciding whether Data is the property of the Star Fleet or not. But the most important and vital way of knowing that Captain Picard used was reason.

Reason would be the most important way of knowing used because when Captain was trying to convince Maddox that Data should have the right to choose. He used deduction to step by step prove his case, first asking him to differentiate between a human and a machine. Then giving facts or in this case getting Maddox to state facts. He would ask him a question about a human or machine. Then ask him a question about Data or state a fact that would go along the same lines of what was said that was the difference between a human and a machine. The facts stated were the premises and at the end they concluded that Data should have the right choose.

An example of this being done is when Maddox is on the stand and Captain Picard asks him what makes people human and one of the categories was intelligence. Captain Picard then asks him whether he thinks Data is intelligent and he replies by saying, “yes he is, he has the ability to cope with new situations.” So the premise here is the fact that Data is intelligent. Two other premises are given which are self awareness and consciousness. In the same way, Captain Picard proves to the court that Data has them using the same deduction, proving that Data is self aware, intelligent and conscious. He then uses the conclusions of his arguments as premises for the final argument of whether Data has rights or not. So he first proves that Data is a sentient, and then uses the facts of him being self aware, intelligent and conscious as premises to prove that he should have rights.

Another time reason is used is when Captain Picard says that Data is like humans in that, they are both made by humans and that they are both machines, just machines of a different type. Although he is using reason here, it is a logical fallacy, a false analogy. Just because humans and Data have those things in common, it does not mean that they are in other ways. He proves that Data feels emotion because he keeps things like, a book, or a portrait of a loved one for no logical reason. He keeps them because he wants them, an emotion.

Another way of knowing that was used was sense perception. When Captain Riker was trying to prove that Data was a machine, he asked him to bend this metal bar that was extremely strong and he was able to do it. Here the way of knowing is sense perception because people are seeing Data bend this metal bar and are thinking that he is a machine since he can do it. He also pulls off Data’s arm, showing everybody the physical hardware, the wires and parts used to build him. This also took away people’s perception of him being human. At first glance, Data may seem human since he looks like one, but when his arm is pulled off and you can see what’s inside, that image of a human is gone.

He also uses sense perception when he switches off Data, showing people that he is a machine, one that can be controlled, people can’t just be turned off, but machines can. This is also deductive reasoning. The fact that all machines can be turned off is one premise. The other that Data can be switched off, therefore he is a machine.

Overall I think that the most important way of knowing that was used was reason since it was the way of knowing that was used to actually win the hearing. Second would be sense perception since it was also used a lot and was the way of knowing used that almost won the argument.